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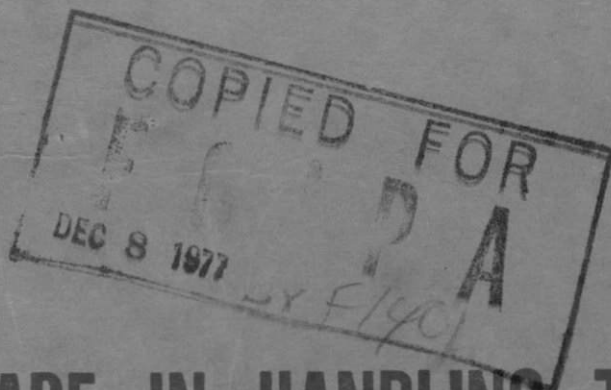
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SEPT. 21, 1958 AUG 10, 64

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SECTION 1

SEP. 21, 1958 AUG. 10, 1964

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# Harlem Woman Stabs Rev. Martin Luther King

## Negro Leader Is Attacked in Store As He Autographs Copies of Book

By Joseph Endler and  
 Richard C. Wald

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, a Negro leader in the fight for integration in the South, was stabbed and critically wounded by a woman yesterday afternoon as he was autographing copies of his book in a Harlem department store.

Police of the W. 123d St. station identified his assailant, a Negro woman, as Izola Ware Curry, forty-two, of 121 W. 122d St.

According to witnesses, at 3:55 p. m., Mrs. Curry, heavy-set woman, pushed her way through a line of about forty persons waiting in L. M. Blumstein's Department Store, 230 W. 125th St., to have copies of Dr. King's book autographed. It was published last week under title, "Stride Toward Freedom."

Dr. King was sitting behind a desk in the back of the store's main floor.

Mrs. Curry shouted:

"Is this Martin Luther King?"

"Yes, it is," he replied. She plunged an eight-inch steel below the neck. Mrs. Anna A.



Associated Press

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

Hedgema, an assistant to Mayor Wagner, who was in the store at the time and saw the incident, said:

"It happened so fast it was incredible."

Mrs. Curry, attempting to flee, stumbled and was grabbed by Walter N. Peddiford, an advertising representative for "The Amsterdam News." According to Mr. Peddiford, she said:

"I've been after him for years."

As Dr. King lay back in his chair, several of the women on the line attempted to attack the woman. She was held for police by two store detectives, Mr. Peddiford said.

The twenty-nine-year-old  
 See DR. KING—Pg. 14, Col. 3

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Wash. Post and Times Herald \_\_\_\_\_  
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 N. Y. Mirror \_\_\_\_\_  
 N. Y. Daily News \_\_\_\_\_  
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clergyman, was taken to Harlem Hospital in the chair he was stabbed in, the letter-opener still protruding through his shirt. There, at 6:30 p.m., he was operated on by Dr. Aubre Maynard, director of surgery at the hospital. His condition was said to be critical.

The woman was taken to the hospital, too, where, it was reported, Dr. King identified her as his assailant. Police said she was carrying a small, fully-loaded Italian automatic in her bosom.

As a word of the stabbing spread rapidly through Harlem, more than fifty persons came to the hospital to offer blood.

Among the first at the hospital was Gov. Harriman, who heard about the stabbing while participating in a Steuben Day Parade on upper Fifth Ave. He came to the hospital at 5:20 p.m. and visited for a few minutes with Dr. King, who was in a room on the second floor.

Dr. King, the Governor said, had told him:

**"I'm going to be all right. Don't worry."**

The Governor commented:

**"He seemed to be the least concerned person in the hospital."**

After Mrs. Curry was identified by Dr. King, she was taken to the W. 123d St. police station for questioning. She told police that she is a native of Georgia and came here at the age of nineteen to work as a domestic. She left New York four years ago and worked variously as a domestic in St. Louis, Mo., in Georgia, and in Daytona Beach, Fla.

She returned to New York three months ago, detectives said, and has been living here ever since.

From receipts found in her apartment, detectives learned that Mrs. Curry had purchased the gun they found—a 6.35-millimeter Brescia, about the size of a .25-caliber pistol—in a pawnshop in Daytona Beach. She paid \$27.84 for it.

Mrs. Curry has been separated from her husband since 1937. They had no children. She is 5 feet 6 inches tall and weighs about 150 pounds. She said she carried the gun "for my own protection," and the letter opener "to open letters."

She also told police that she had been "persecuted by people for the past four years."

During the questioning it

developed, police said that she did not know Dr. King, had never seen him before and had no particular grudge against him. But, police said, her account of what happened earlier in the day was "incoherent."

Dr. King, minister of the Dexter Ave. Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala., came into national prominence two years ago when he led the Negroes of his city on a boycott of the local buses. He wanted, and won, integrated seating on the buses. Since then, he has been a leader in the fight for integration on a national scale.

He came here last week to publicize his book. While here, he was being shown the city by former deputy Police Commissioner William Rowe, now an assistant to Hulan E. Jack, Manhattan Borough President.

#### At Harlem Rally

With Mr. Rowe and Mr. Jack, Mr. King appeared Friday night at a Harlem rally for integration. He was the chief speaker. On the platform with him were Gov. Harriman and Nelson A. Rockefeller, the Democratic and Republican nominees for the governorship.

At that time, Gov. Harriman said of the Negro minister:

**"No man has done more to underscore the immorality of segregation than Martin Luther King."**

He was not, however, universally cheered. At the rally, a group of twelve Negroes, led by Lewis Henry Micheaux, owner of the National Memorial Bookstore, 2107 Seventh Ave., picketed Dr. King. Mr. Micheaux

said it was because Dr. King ignored Negro-owned bookstores in Harlem.

#### Negro "Nationalists"

Several of the pickets, though, men in their twenties who claimed membership in an organization called the United African Nationalist Movement, told the New York Herald Tribune that they opposed Dr. King's fight for integration. Integration, they said, "lowered the dignity" of their race.

Mr. Jack suggested, as the pickets marched around, that Dr. King might need a bodyguard. According to Mr. Rowe, Dr. King replied:

**"Oh, God, don't get a bodyguard. And" (to Mr. Rowe) "don't you try to look like one, either."**

At 1:30 p.m. today, Mr. Rowe called for Dr. King at the Statler Hotel, where he was staying. He drove him up to Blumstein's where, from 2 p.m. until he was stabbed, Dr. King signed hundreds of copies of his book.

In the turmoil that followed the stabbing, while women attempted furiously to attack his assailant, Dr. King remained calm and quiet. He said only that he felt "a swelling in the chest."

#### Officials at Hospital

By the time he was wheeled out of his hospital room to be operated on, a small crowd of officials gathered at his door. Among them, besides Gov. Harriman and Mr. Jack, were Roy Wilkins, the executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored

People; A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; State Sen. James Watson; Chief Inspector of Police Thomas A. Nielson and Deputy Commissioner Walter Arm.

Commissioner Arm said that Police Commissioner Stephen P. Kennedy and Mayor Wagner had expressed concern over the stabbing and were being kept informed of Dr. King's condition.

Dr. King was to have taken a plane last night from Newark Airport to Montgomery. There, the news of his stabbing was received almost with disbelief. His personal secretary said that Mrs. King was too upset to talk with newsmen.

During all the time of the Montgomery boycott, when violence flared occasionally, Dr. King suffered no harm. Recently he was charged with disorderly conduct when he refused to obey a policeman's order to get away from the Montgomery Court House steps. His \$14 fine was paid by the local police commissioner, Clyde Sellers, who did not want to see Dr. King become a "martyr," he said.

# Rev. King Mends; Was A 'Sneeze From Death'

By HENRY LEE

The Rev. Martin Luther King, out of immediate danger but so seriously wounded that his convalescence will take about three months, yesterday was reported in "satisfactory" condition as his assailant was ordered to Bellevue Hospital for mental observation.

During a 2½-hour operation on the Negro integration leader late Saturday to extricate a stiletto-like letter opener from his chest, part of one rib had to be removed, and only yesterday physicians disclosed that the 29-year-old Baptist clergyman had been "a sneeze away from death."

Dr. Emil A. Naclerio, one of three participating surgeons, explained that the tip of the weapon had rested on the aorta, the great arterial trunk which carries blood from the heart.

## Guarded at Hospital

"Had he sneezed or coughed, the weapon would have pene-



Mrs. Isola Ware Curry  
Accused for attack

trated the aorta—and he would have died within a minute."

Today his condition still remained so delicate that only the immediate family was allowed two brief visits during the day in his private room at Harlem Hospital with Dr. Aubrey Maynard, director of surgery, also present. Outside, two policemen kept guard.

In Felony Court, Mrs. Isola Ware Curry, 42, Negro domestic from Adrian, Ga., was arraigned for the Saturday afternoon attack on Dr. King as he was autographing copies of his new book in a Harlem department store.

## Corrects the Judge

"I understand this is the woman who is accused of stabbing the Rev. Mr. King with a knife," Magistrate Vincent P. Rao said.

"No, it was a letter opener," Mrs. Curry corrected him.

Explaining that Mrs. Curry was charged with felonious assault and possession of a loaded automatic, Assistant District Attorney Howard Jones asked that she be held without bail.

"She is unemployed and has no roots here," he said.

"I'm charging him as well as he's charging me," Mrs. Curry interrupted.

"What have you got against him?" Magistrate Rao asked.

"I'm charging him with being mixed up with the Communists," the woman explained. "I've reported the case to the FBI and

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The Worker \_\_\_\_\_  
New Leader \_\_\_\_\_

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it's being looked into. I want a lawyer from the state."

"This woman is ill," Rao said.

"I'm not ill!" Mrs. Curry answered sharply.

Asked if she had a lawyer, she said, "Yes, his name is Herman." As she was led away, she shouted that the lawyer's name was Sanford or Stanford, her words being difficult to understand.

At Harlem Hospital, almost overwhelmed by the telegrams, phone calls, offers of donations



(Associated Press photo)

Mrs. Isola Ware Curry was carrying this Italian automatic pistol in purse when she stabbed Dr. King.

and gifts of Bibles which poured in for Dr. King, an early bulletin disclosed that he had spent a comfortable night under care of special nurses.

Dr. King's wife, a sister and the Rev. Ralph Abernathy, an associate in the Montgomery, Ala., Improvement Association, arrived at LaGuardia Field at 5:47 A. M.

#### Surgery Successful

William L. Rowe, former deputy police commissioner and a friend of Dr. King, first took them to the Queens home of the Rev. Thomas Kilgore Jr., pastor of the Friendship Baptist Church, 144 W. 131st St. Later, Mrs. King registered at the Statler Hotel and visited her husband at 9:45 A. M.

"It was the will of God that

Martin survived," she told Dr. Maynard. "Our prayers have been not in vain.

"While we surgeons have the skill and the knowledge and the experience, we know too that there is much we cannot control and must rely on faith and prayers," the doctor told her.

Dr. Maynard assured her that while the operation had been "very delicate," the surgery "was successful and the prognosis good." Dr. King's mental attitude, he said, was "excellent." He was feeling little pain and had required only a little sedation.

Mrs. King thanked the surgeon, his associates "and all the people at the hospital."

#### Feels No Bitterness

"I would also like to express appreciation to Gov. Harriman and all of the leaders and citizens of this city who have shown their support in various ways," she added.

Toward Mrs. Curry, she said, she feels no bitterness, explaining:

"She was obviously disturbed because she no doubt is not completely responsible for her action."



(NEWS photo by Pat Candido)

Christine King (left), sister, and Mrs. Martin Luther King leave Harlem Hospital after visiting the pastor yesterday.



Mr. Tolson	
Mr. Boardman	
Mr. Nichols	
Mr. Nease	
Mr. Parsons	
Mr. Rosen	
Mr. Tamm	
Mr. Winterrowd	
Mr. W.J. Sullivan	
Tele. Room	
Mr. Holloman	
Miss Gandy	

# Georgians Send King's Attacker Cash for Needs

CARTERSVILLE, Ga., Sept. 23 (AP)—A group of white citizens Tuesday mailed a cash contribution to Mrs. Isola Ware Curry, the Negro woman who stabbed integrationist Martin Luther King.

Coal dealer J. B. White Jr., a spokesman, said a substantial sum was sent "to be used by her as needed" and that more will follow.

Mrs. Curry is in Bellevue Hospital, New York, for mental observation. She claims, Adrian, Ga., in Emanuel County near Swainsboro, as her home town.

The white group labels itself the Cartersville chapter of the Funds for Isola League. White said it is the first chapter but others may be formed.

King, who is now in a New York hospital with a touch of pneumonia, was stabbed with a steel paper knife in a Harlem department store Saturday as he autographed copies of his book, "Stride Toward Freedom."

He is a minister at Montgomery, Ala., where he led a successful year-long Negro boycott against segregated buses.

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Atlanta, Georgia  
9/23/58  
Editor: JACK SPALDING

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# Rev. King Impatient

## to Resume Work

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DATED SEP 24 1958

PAGE 4

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RE: RACIAL SITUATIONS

BUFILE -

By TED POSTON

The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. today looked forward to shortening his expected stay in Harlem Hospital, despite the warnings of doctors.

The youthful advocate of non-violence, who was stabbed Saturday by Mrs. Izola Ware Curry, 42, an apparently deranged domestic, showed such progress that he was permitted to prolong a visit with his wife, Coretta, until 11:30 o'clock last night.

Although he conceded that a

change of dressings yesterday was "quite painful," and that he was placed under sedation briefly after the experience, the Montgomery bus boycott leader is anxious to speed his recovery so that he may continue civil rights projects already scheduled at the time of his injury.

He was particularly pleased to find that a long-planned Norfolk, Va., conference of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which he heads, has been postponed until later next month in

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the hope that he might have recovered sufficiently by then to address it.

The organization, composed mainly of Southern ministers who have followed King's doctrine of non-violent resistance to segregation, has established a temporary branch office in Harlem Hospital, with Ella Baker, associate director, in charge.

The office, in which the minister's wife assists, has been handling the largest influx of mail,

telegrams, phone calls and floral tributes ever received by a single patient in the hospital's history.

Among the letters was one from Vice President Nixon saying that the "Christian spirit of tolerance which you invariably displayed in the face of your opponents and detractors will in the end contribute immeasurably in winning the support of the great majority of Americans for the cause of equality and human dignity."

But a farring note came yesterday in an anonymous phone call warning that a bomb had been planted there. A police search failed to show up any such device.

Today, the young minister was looking forward eagerly to the arrival from Rochester, Minn., his mother who has been at the Mayo Clinic for examination of an eye ailment and for a checkup.

He expressed admiration yes-

terday to other members of his family, including his wife, his sister, Christine King, and his father, for the way that his mother had accepted the news of the stabbing.

"I knew that she would hold up under the shock," he told them. "She always stood up well in the face of adversity."

Because of the rapid rate of his progress, his younger brother, the Rev. A. D. King, assistant pastor of the father's Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Ga., will not come here.

King maintained his cheerful and joking demeanor with his family yesterday as authorities reported continued progress despite a brief touch of post-operative pneumonia.

Permitted to walk several yards for the first time to the X-ray machine and to sit up in a chair for the second day for short periods, he chaffed his relatives by saying:

"Why didn't you tell me I had pneumonia? Here I was feeling better than I'd felt since they brought me here, and I had to read in the newspapers that I was a pneumonia victim."

His wife told him that his three-year-old daughter, Yolande, was now a definite expert in the art of using a hula-hoop.

Mrs. King, who had talked long distance with Mrs. Juanita Abernathy, wife of the Rev. Ralph Abernathy, King's chief lieutenant in the successful Montgomery bus boycott movement, told him that Yolande and her playmate, little Juandalynn Abernathy, 4, now had their own individual hula-hoops and were very good at using them.

"Martin," she said of her husband, "had tried to show Yoki (Yolande) how it was done when the craze first started, but he could never make the hoop go around but once or twice. And now little Mike (their son who was 11 months old yesterday) wants to try."

Hospital authorities, whose latest bulletin said, "condition satisfactory. Some improvement. Prognosis guarded," were elated by one aspect of the unfortunate incident which brought them their noted patient.

The attack on King brought Gov. Harriman on his first visit inside Harlem Hospital and the Governor, noting the crowded conditions in the institution last Saturday night, indicated that he would lend his support to a program for expansion and modernization of the hospital.

Harriman, who visited King again Monday, after the slight touch of pneumonia was first reported, was expected to return there tomorrow after a campaign tour upstate, and hospital officials were looking forward to the visit.

"It is an ill wind that blows nobody good," one official said. "Who knows? King may have done more for us than we were able to do for him, when this is all over."



# Ike Aid, Nixon Pen Get-Well To Rev. King

From a special Presidential assistant, from Vice President Nixon and even from Little Rock, Ark., get-well messages by the hundreds poured into Harlem Hospital yesterday as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King rallied slowly from a chest stab wound.

The 29-year-old Negro integration leader, attacked last Saturday in a Harlem department store by an apparently mentally disturbed woman, showed continuing "improvement," the hospital announced.

## He Gets to Walk

Despite a touch of pneumonia following 2½ hours of surgery on Saturday, Dr. King yesterday was able to walk 30 feet with assistance to an X-ray room. He has been able to sit up and read newspapers, and the hospital described him as "a cheerful, cooperative patient."

Vice President Nixon wired that he had been "terribly distressed" to hear of the attack and added: "To have this incident added to all of the unfortunate indignities which have been heaped upon you is, indeed, difficult to understand." He lauded King's "Christian spirit of tolerance."

## Note From Siciliano

Rocco C. Siciliano, special assistant for personnel management to President Eisenhower, wrote on White House stationery that he was "shocked." "Your courage in the face of adversity is well known," he said.

Dr. Israel Goldstein, president of the American Jewish Congress and rabbi of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, on W. 88th St., left a letter saying that Jews would pray for Dr. King on Yom Kippur. He praised Dr. King's "forgiveness and charity."

## Word From Arkansas

There were wires from the ministers of the Arkansas Christian Movement, the Inter-Faith Fellowship of Greater Little Rock and the Arkansas Council on Human Relations.

One "hate" letter, signed "White Voting Citizen Mississippi," expressed regret that the accused attacker, Mrs. Isola Ware Curry, 42, "didn't finish the job."

In Cartersville, Ga., a group of white calling themselves the Cartersville Chapter of the Funds for Isola League sent a substantial cash contribution to Mrs. Curry "to be used by her as needed." Mrs. Curry, a native of Georgia, is now undergoing mental tests at Bellevue Hospital.

Tolson ☒  
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